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SUBJECT: CANADIAN PM VOWS TO KEEP PRESSURE ON IRAN

REF: OTTAWA 156; STATE 12108

¶1. (U) Prime Minister Stephen Harper on February 10 expressed Canada's concern about Iran's nuclear enrichment program as well as its "deplorable human rights practices." He pledged to use Canada's G8 presidency in 2010 to work with partners to "hold Iran to account" through "strong and viable solutions, including sanctions." Full text in para 2.

¶2. (U) Begin text of the Prime Minister's statement on February 10:

Canada is deeply disturbed by Iran's decision further to enrich its nuclear material in defiance of UN Security Council resolutions. The regime's latest moves bring Iran considerably closer to possessing weapons-grade material.

Iran's past history of deliberately concealing aspects of its nuclear program makes this latest move even more worrying. Through its actions, Iran continues to test the resolve of the international community.

It is time for Iran to end its defiance of the international community, suspend its enrichment activity and take immediate steps toward transparency and compliance by halting the construction of new enrichment sites, and fully cooperating with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Canada will continue to work with our allies to find strong and viable solutions, including sanctions, to hold Iran to account. Canada will use its G-8 presidency to continue to focus international attention and action on the Iranian regime.

In addition to our unease with the Iranian nuclear program, Canada will continue to voice our very serious concerns with the Iranian regime's stifling of democracy, its deplorable human rights practices, and its negative implications for both regional and global stability.

End text
JACOBSON